

Shortgrassers Get Genuine Rain Plus Some Of The Usual Dry Ones

By Monte Noelke

3-12-70

Page 7

MERTZON — Another rain has come to the Shortgrass country. Greenery is sprouting so fast that the cornerstones are in danger of being covered up. I left the ranch this morning on horseback and by the time I reached the back of the horsetrap the weeds has grown half an inch

Dispatches arriving at the coffee houses confirm that everyone has received close to the same amount of moisture. The hombres who always stretch their measurements are reporting 2 inches; thus it's safe to say that the area has had at least an inch.

You have to watch these Shortgrassers during rainy spells. On any size livestock trade, their word is more binding than the Federal Tax Code; but when it comes to rain gauge reading, I'd as soon trust a Gypsy fortune teller.

Honest men such as myself don't fit in. There's no way of checking a bogus report. I've seen it rain 6 inches out here without ever settling the dust. As other lands have dry snows, we have dry rains. The moisture comes from the sky wetter than a washerwoman's apron, but as it hits the ground the dampness splashes back into the atmosphere. Nothing that happens on the rangelands can be as disheartening as to get a big dry rain.

Gauging one to these phenomena is impossible. Nobody has ever invented a rain gauge that'll register the minus factor. You just have to watch the moisture fall, then estimate the loss. As a general rule, however, most of the dry rains don't run under the minus-.20 range. After an old boy has been through two or three of them, he can guess fairly close to the amount of damage.

Beside our having mysterious dry rains, those city fellows over in San Angelo do their share to complicate our weather. They've turned into flood worshippers. Ever since they got the rivers dammed up close to the city, their common greeting to us country brothers is: "I sure hope you have some floods out on our watershed, so they'll fill up our lakes."

Well, out here on the watershed, we sure hope we have a flood, too. I don't know anything that's any better for a rancher than to have his fence swept down the creek, and six or eight inches of his topsoil washed downstream. Have a few hundred head of sheep drown isn't as bad as it sounds. Disasters like floods are not to be dreaded; people need to be shaken up to make them hustle and show some spirit.

However, I do suspect that the city folks praying for a flood, and the country people asking for half and inch, tends to confuse matters. Theologians don't say whether the good Lord handles His business on a one-man, one-vote basis, but you can see that a lot of conflicting requests would make his work harder to process.

The die is cast for a beautiful spring. It'll take a mighty March wind to dry us up now. I do wish those boys around the cafes would try to be more honest. It'd be an awful thing if outsiders got to thinking the Shortgrass Country had turned into a swamp.